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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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STEWARD HINCH PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

Baltimore, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that Steward Hinch, age 41, of Hartford County, pled guilty before United States District Court Judge Richard D. Bennett to stealing in excess of \$200,000 in government property.

Hinch was the manager of the Ruggles Golf Course and Pro Shop from April 1998 until April 2002. Ruggles is located at the Army base at Aberdeen Proving Ground. The Golf Course and Pro Shop is administered by the Department of the Army and as such generate revenues, through the payment of membership dues and greens fees and the purchase of merchandise, which belong to the Department of the Army.

During his tenure as Pro Shop manager, Hinch executed a complicated theft scheme that ultimately resulted in losses in excess of \$200,000. As Pro Shop manager, Hinch was responsible for preparing and submitting various reports which purported to record each day's financial transactions. Hinch systematically falsified those records in order to conceal the fact that he was skimming payments made and owing to Ruggles. Among other things, Hinch used off-duty

employees' cash register sign-on numbers, which he knew by reason of his position as manager, to record fraudulent transactions.

Hinch faces a maximum sentence of 10 years. His sentencing is scheduled for July 29, 2004.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Defense Contract Audit Agency, Aberdeen Proving Ground Internal Review and Audit Compliance. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jonathan Mastrangelo and Joyce McDonald.